

cus sessiliflora which yields the best timber for ship-building. The characters pointed out, will for the most part, be found pretty constant, although it may be remarked that the oak is a tree subject to great variations. The British Oak, for instance, sometimes bears its fruit almost close to the stem, and sometimes the sessile fruited bears the acorns on a short foot-stalk; the leaves too frequently vary in the length of the foot-stalk, but in a general way the above distinctions readily point out the difference. The following lines were by Cowper addressed to the hollow trunk of a gigantic oak:—

“Thou wert a bauble once, a cup and ball
Which babes might play with; and the thievish jay
Seeking her food, with ease might have purloined
The auburn nut that held thee, swallowing down
Thy yet close folded latitude of boughs,
And all thy embryo vastness at a gulp,
Time made thee what thou wert—king of the woods!
And time hath made thee what thou art—a cave
For owls to roost in!—Once thy spreading boughs
O’erhung the campaign, and the numerous flock
That graz’d it stood beneath that ample cope
Uncrowded, yet safe sheltered from the storm.”

Scott calls it the “Warrior Oak.” Beauty of a sublime character, united with strength, is characteristic of the oak, which, like the lion among animals, is the unquestionable “king of the forest.”

“————— The Oak
Once formed man’s house and oracle, its fruit

His food. Now the patriot monarch leaves
A throne of centuries, leaves the forest
Hills, o’er mountain waves to rule triumphant
Great father of ships.”

LEGENDE.

An Oak in Amphill Park, Bedfordshire, measures more than forty feet at the base. It is hollow, and the age of the tree must be very great, but the loss of the concentric circles, by which the age of a tree can be ascertained, prevents its being correctly determined.—A plate is affixed to it bearing the following inscription:—

“Majestic tree, whose wrinkled form hath stood
Age after age, the patriarch of the wood!
Thou who hast seen a thousand springs unfold
Their ravel’d buds, and dip their flowers in gold:
Ten thousand times yon moon relight her horn,
And that bright star of evening gild the morn:—
Gigantic oak! thy hoary head sublime
Erewhile must perish in the wrecks of time.
Should round thy head innocuous lightnings shoot,
And no fierce whirlwind shake thy steadfast root,
Yet shalt thou fall; thy leafy tresses fade,
And those bare scattered antlers strew the glade:
Arm after arm shall leave thy mouldering bust,
And thy firm fibres crumble into dust.
The muse alone shall consecrate thy name,
And by her powerful art prolong thy fame;
Green shall thy leaves extend, thy branches play,
And bloom for ever in th’ immortal clay.”

Oaks among forest trees have ever stood conspicuously pre-eminent; none have been so un-